

to see that combinations are mere outright monopolies, which even heathen civil laws—I will say nothing of divine right and Christian law—condemn as a plainly harmful thing in all the world ? ""

So resolute an enemy of licence might have been expected to be the champion of law. It might have been supposed that Luther, with his hatred of the economic appetites, would have hailed as an ally the restraints by which, at least in theory, those appetites had been controlled. In reality, of course, his attitude towards the mechanism of ecclesiastical jurisprudence and discipline was the opposite. It was one, not merely of indifference, but of repugnance. The prophet who scourged with whips the cupidity of the individual chastised with scorpions the restrictions imposed upon it by society ; the apostle of an ideal ethic of Christian love turned a shattering dialectic on the corporate organization of the Christian Church. In most ages, so tragic a parody of human hopes are human institutions, there have been some who have loved mankind, while hating almost everything that men have done or made. Of that temper Luther, who lived at a time when the contrast between a sublime theory and a hideous reality had long been intolerable, is the supreme example. He preaches a selfless charity, but he recoils with horror from every institution by which an attempt

had been
 made to give it a concrete expression. He
 reiterates
 the content of mediaeval economic teaching
 with a
 literalness rarely to be found in the thinkers
 of the later
 Middle Ages, but for the rules and
 ordinances in which
 it had received a positive, if sadly
 imperfect, expres-
 sion, he has little but abhorrence. God
 speaks^ to the
 soul, not ^through the mediation of the
 priesthood or of
 social ihsfeti^ ^ *cum*
solo,
 as^ a v^cejn^h^jieart^ ag4 in, the heart
 alone. Thus the
 Bridges between the worlds of spirit and of
 sense are
 broken, and the soul is isolated from the
 society of men,
 that it may enter into communion with
 its Maker.